

- 774 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of
 779 conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of
 [75] the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as
 its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a
 snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the
 soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to
 get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the
 soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-
 shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are
 equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they
 are too rough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the
 body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second
 earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same
 thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel
 anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only
 separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man
 should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort
 to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return
 to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will
 be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall
 unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.*
- [828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated
 from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession
 of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

- 793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser
 extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are
 a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious
 functions; in return the rest of society should give material support
 to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important;
 the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are
 also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and
 the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs.
 The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher
 rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they
 have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks,
 which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In
 Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is
 considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person'
 owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

* The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain;
 they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

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quarrelsomeness were on the whole justly ascribed to those people who manifested these qualities; but I could never get people to allot differences in socially valuable qualities, to say for example that A. was a better or worse worker than B. or more or less generous. 626 157

I think that I was more conscious in the difference in the characters of the various Lepchas of Lingthem than the Lepchas themselves were; as a member of my culture I naturally judged people emotionally and liked or disliked them for differences of character rather than for their behaviour towards me. Towards the end of my stay I found that I had taken a really firm dislike to some people, particularly to Aga and Katel, whom I considered mean and sly and altogether unpleasant. Aga was fairly generally disliked, but when I told the people I was intimate with that I disliked Katel they obviously could not understand my reasons: he had not treated me badly in any way. When I tried to explain more fully my reasons for disliking him they would explain that he was foolish and did not know how to behave properly. For them this was a sufficient explanation; it wasn't his fault he was a fool and this was no reason for disliking him, provided he fulfilled his obligations. In the same way although lame orphaned Satéo through his clumsiness and incompetence always botched whatever work he was doing, nobody thought of reproving him or preventing him joining in the communal work—he was a liability on any job—because he was patently doing his best and couldn't help his clumsiness. If on the other hand he had been an able-bodied man who through laziness or spite was doing bad work he would undoubtedly be reprimanded and publicly shamed. 828

Lepchas are very unwilling to speculate on the motives of another's behaviour, whether in the past or present; they always turned aside such questions with the catch phrase 'Who can see into the heart of another?'

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Although it is difficult and of questionable value to try to describe the intellectual and temperamental characteristics of the average Lepcha it is perhaps worth while to point out some of their more pronounced group attitudes. The Lepchas possess remarkably vivid and exact verbal and visual memories. They do not prize intellectual quickness and it is on the whole not one of their characteristics. Numbers are practically meaningless to them and 153

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all three saving up as hard as we can to have a really pukka house with a tin roof and good floors; for this reason we are denying ourselves practically everything except the barest necessities until we get our house. (*His eyes gleamed as he spoke about this.*) We wear the plainest of clothes; my wife has no jewels, but puts the money aside from her cardamum to pay for the house; we only eat plain food, just rice. Others waste a lot of crops for *chi* but we don't; now and again we have a little but between whiles we just drink tea. *We* don't get into debt for showy clothes and useless gew-gaws. Even now I am really richer than Tafoor who has lots and lots of debts; and as for my father (Ashyok) and my elder brother (Aplung), why they haven't anything; as soon as they get a rupee they go and spend it and never save a *pice*. Of course we give feasts; if we did not follow the *lungthen* (custom) and perform the proper ceremonies we would die. Yes, it is nice when we give the monastery feast; our turn comes in the winter; last year we gave a pig. But soon—soon—we will have the lovely house with the tin roof; there won't be another one like it in Lingthem, though I have heard that the younger brother of Takneum who lives at Tangvong has got one. As soon as we have saved up enough money we will give the measurements to the *kanya* and they will get the corrugated iron. We would certainly never think of going to buy *chi* as other people do if we run out of it.' 159^x 556

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An important group of deviants are the defectives. Of these there are three, all males; they are Sangkyar, the elder son of Gongyop's eldest brother (now dead: the other son is lame Satéo), the middle son of Asang, and Kanden, the elder son of Také and the elder brother of Dadool. Although Sangkyar is very different from the other two, all three show the same symptoms of compulsive wandering, and this is considered by Lepchas to be an inevitable concomitant to feeble-mindedness in males: indeed they are called 'wanderers'. This symptom does not apparently show itself in girls and women; I neither saw nor heard of similarly afflicted girls. 159^x 732 [828]●

Sangkyar I only saw once. He has a typically cretinous expression and type of behaviour. He is the example *par excellence* of the bad boy, the *tané*; he wanders about and sleeps in the forest and steals from other people's houses and fields. He takes food and

One day at a wedding (it was a rainy day), near the
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shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment. [159x] [833]

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes. [837] [826]

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong rum had plagued him after he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself. [753]

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews. [728]

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in

[868] Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them.

[515] This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once,

when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents.

This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this

● [828] way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she

[857] is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

prevent this evil spirit from returning to a house, where he had just⁷⁷⁶ caused a death, the mourners on their way back from the funeral put⁷⁶⁴ hedges of thorns across the road, to prevent *Mă zóm mung* from following them. In some localities it is the custom to scare *Mă zóm mung* away by heating during the night after the funeral three huge stones on the hearth. The stones are later brought into the open and somebody of those present calls the name of this demon, asking him to come and eat some meat. The demon, who is believed to be very greedy, comes immediately and tries to swallow the stones, but he burns himself badly and runs away.

Shom mung is a malignant spirit, who causes people to commit⁷⁷⁶ suicide or murder. He creeps close to a man from the back and then⁷⁶⁴ suddenly enters his mind and taking possession of his victim, forces him ultimately to commit the evil deed. This demon is also held⁸²³ responsible for all accidental death.

A soul, which was captured by *Shom mung*, is unable to proceed⁷⁷⁶ to the other world unless it had been freed by a *Mün* from the power⁷⁶⁴ of the evil spirit. To perform this ceremony, a *Mün* has to come in⁷⁷⁵ the evening after the funeral to the victim's house. On this occasion, the *Mün* is wearing a red dress, with a head-band of the same colour. At the beginning of the ceremony, an animal is killed and its blood collected in a big, flat vessel in order to attract the bloodthirsty spirit. The *Mün* then takes her place in front of this vessel and goes into a trance. After some time she suddenly declares that *Shom mung* has entered the container and she throws now into the blood a grass whisk, which she had held ready in her right hand. Leaving the whisk in the vessel —“to keep the demon down”—she grasps a flat stick made from *Nyol hung*¹¹ wood, which is lying at her right side, and begins to beat frantically the surface of the blood pool, in order to “kill the demon”. All those present, shouting and screaming, join her in this beginning, using sticks, stones and knives as weapons. After a while, the *Mün* takes the vessel outside the house and pours its contents into a hole, which had been dug previously in the compound, and then all weapons which were used during the ceremony, are also thrown into the pit, which is quickly closed. Only when this ceremony had been performed for somebody, who had fallen victim to *Shom mung*, can his *Māk nyam* be guided afterwards in the usual way to the *Rām lyang*. It is believed, that unless *Shom mung* is killed, he will become attached to the family which had omitted the rite just described, and he will kill its members one by one.

Another pair of dangerous supernaturals are the demon *Thing*⁷⁷⁶ *mung* and his wife *Nyo mung*, who are able to bring a man's life